Indo-Russian Joint Working Group

1040. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and Russia held 1st Joint Working Group meet on global challenges at New Delhi recently;

(b) if so, the points discussed; and

(c) by when the next meeting will take place?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Yes.

(b) In the discussions held during the meeting of the Joint Working Group on Group on Global Challenges in New Delhi on 13th October, 2003, India and Russia exchanged views on a wide range of international issues. These included the situation in Iraq, the role of the United Nations, the situation in Afghanistan and Central Asia, the threat of international terrorism and phenomena related to it such as illicit drug and arms trafficking, organized crime, money laundering and the possibility of weapons of mass destruction falling into hands of terrorists.

(c) The next meeting of the Joint Working Group is to be held in Moscow in the spring of 2004, on mutually convenient dates.

Invitation to India from OIC

1041. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken note of Communique of the OIC Summit in October, 2003 and of the fact that several non-member States were invited to participate in the event;

(b) whether India with the second biggest Muslim Community in the World was also invited;

(c) if so, the reasons for not accepting the invitation; and

(d) if not, whether it was a deliberate omission or it was engineered by hostile States which are members of the OIC?